FACULTY SENATE

September 22nd, 2009
SU-217

Minutes

Present: Tony Adams, Sandra Beyda-Lorie, Denise Cloonan-Cortez, Dennis Grammenos, Rodney Higginbotham, Jianfeng Jiang, Judith Kaplan-Weinger, Phyllis Le Dosquet, Shahrzad Mahootian, Eleni Makris, Janalyn Meehan, Selina Mushi, Frank Perino, Dario Villa

Absent: David Jordan, Sue Mungre
Ex-Officio: Provost Lawrence Frank

Guests: Hamid Akbari (Chair, Management and Marketing), Ana Gil-Garcia (Professor, LEAD), Tim Libretti (Chair, English Dept)

Chair Kaplan-Weinger called the meeting to order at 1:45**.**

1) Minutes
Motion to approve the minutes of September 8th, 2009 by R. Higginbotham (S. Mushi) passed pending corrections, S. Beyda-Lorie, D. Cloonan-Cortez, J. Meehan abstaining.

2) Report from the Chair
Chair Kaplan-Weinger stated her desire that Faculty Senate members know the Faculty Constitution fully, especially regarding the role and responsibilities of the Senate.

D. Villa noted that the constitution had recently been revised (2007) with a recent amendment that provided inclusion of non-tenured non-tenure track (NTT) faculty. It was noted that despite this amendment there remain vacancies in these seats.
It was acknowledged that identifying and contacting NTT faculty for the purpose of inclusion in senate seat elections has been difficult due to their high turn-over.

Chair Kaplan-Weinger introduced and welcomed the guests who were invited by the Steering Committee to present on the role of the Faculty Senate, shared governance and collective bargaining from the perspective of former Senate chair (Hamid Akbari), and former members, Tim Libretti and Ana Gil-Garcia.

Discussion opened with the notion **shared governance**: Is there a university-wide shared governance statement?
Hamid Akbari, former member (1997-1999) and chair of faculty senate (1999-2001) stated that there is a statement signed by former president Salme Steinberg and recounted the events that resulted in the shared governance statement. A crisis was set off by the resignation of the former Dean of the College of Education, Dr. Nan Giblin. The crisis

was eventually collaboratively resolved through active mediation by the Faculty Senate and resulted in the reinstatement of Dr. Giblin and the shared governance statement. This statement, which was signed by President Steinberg, reinforced the principles of the shared governance of university affairs by the faculty and administration. The document has two key elements: 1) respect for shared governance, and 2) transparency in decision-making regarding university affairs. A town hall style event was held to mark the shared governance statement and it was determined that annual events, such as panels on shared governance, would continue to highlight this critical resolution. The annual events were not, unfortunately, followed up.

E. Makris commented that the distinction between governance the senate's role and contractual issues and the union's role in concrete issues is not always clear. She also wondered about the binding status of the shared governance document and how it could be enforced

T. Libretti: the question is how we choose to empower ourselves as faculty. The role of the senate should be to actively, objectively promote a culture of respect and shared consciousness. The recent collective bargaining proposal put forth by the administration suggests a great divide between faculty and administration's objectives. We need to find a way to create a climate for a broader conversation.

S. Mahootian suggested that some contractual issues may also be a governance matter, in particular one of academic freedom or integrity. An example would be the cap on class size.S. Mushi agreed.
Provost Frank did not agree that cap size on classes was an academic issue.

3) Presentation: Perspectives of the Mission of the Faculty Senate

Hamid Akbari, former Faculty Senate Chair
H. Akbari shared his perspective with the Senate. He stated that this job really requires informing and talking to the president about faculty issues, concerns and ideas. The Senate serves as the faculty advisory for the President. On the difference between the roles of the senate and the union, he said that in his view the two are complementary. Whereas the union negotiates with the administration for a contract via the collective bargaining and works with the administration to enforce the letter of the contract, the Senate works constructively with the President to preserve the practice and spirit of the shared governance. Otherwise, the Senate fails in its job to represent the faculty. It is the senate's job to put tough questions to the president and to give a constructive and critical review of administrators when it becomes necessary; if it does not do so, it fails in its job to represent the faculty to the President, and it may result in the occurrence of unforeseen crises in governance for the university.

Tim Libretti, former Faculty Senate member
T. Libretti proposed that it is not so much the senate's role as how it chooses to empower itself that matters. Based on his experience as a member of the collective bargaining unit,

he believes that the underlying issue of the conflict within the university is a cultural problem that collective bargaining intensifies. By being a genuinely representative body, the senate can play a role in creating a collective consciousness by being a voice for the faculty, healing divisions and reducing the resulting unproductive stress and anxiety. He expressed concern that we may collapse under the stress and tension of our work-loads as we carry them in isolation from each other. All kinds of questions need to be addressed in a genuine dialogue that addresses the feeling of disrespect and overwork that many faculty experience. We need a clear sense of the work to be done as a community, what the work is, how to manage it, and how to respect each other. How do we have this conversation? Town Hall meetings are not a satisfactory way in my view. Endless collective bargaining is draining. A climate survey has been suggested in order to identify the underlying issue. He made a plea for the senate's facilitation of an ongoing direct dialogue between members of the faculty that would lead to a broader conversation as a university.

Anna Gil-Garcia, former Faculty Senate member
A. Gil Garcia agreed that the conversation that Tim suggested must take place. The question is, can we really separate the role of the senate from the broader picture? The distinction between the roles of the senate, the FCAA and the union is artificial. The conversation about faculty issues should be more open. She noted that although there is progress in the university, she is concerned that there is also a regression in the level of satisfaction among faculty. It is possible that we are at a breaking point. For 18 months the collective bargaining process has been going on, and there has been no headway. We are at a stalemate now. Is the Faculty Senate door really open? She agreed that there should be some type of climate survey. Could the Faculty Senate facilitate an open conversation to address what is really going on? The faculty is a critical component to the progress of the university.

Provost Frank commented that that the role of the Faculty Senate is less clear in this institution than in other institutions because in many institutions the faculty senate does the work done here by collective bargaining and the FCAA. The question of non-tenured and non-tenure track faculty is challenging and in his opinion related to broader cultural issues.
In the last two and half years efforts towards greater transparency include the disclosure of the administration's strategic plan and the Strategic Planning and Budget Committee (SPBC) also known as the University Budgetary Council established by the board of trustees. The provost invited the senate to discuss the SPBC plans. In the future the SPBC would like to have a discussion with the senate regarding the list of initiatives for the fiscal year.

4) **Report from the President's Office** *(Handed out: President' Report to the Board of Trustees of NEIU September 17, 2009, Part C Strategic Planning FY 2009 Workplan Results and Part D Strategic Planning FY 2010 Workplan*)
5) **New Business**

- There was a consensus to the implementation of interviews with department and program faculty that would entail face-to-face conversations with volunteer Faculty Senate members visiting departments/programs. Faculty Senate members agreed to volunteer to interview particular departments. Senate members will e-mail one another with their choices, filling in a single chart, The questions to be asked will be e-mailed to Senators before the next meeting. Senators will take notes on the input received from department/program faculty for later report to the Senate.

- The communication study survey from SIUE was passed around and collected. Surveys were to be turned in to Chair Kaplan-Weinger.
- Self nominees D. Cloonan-Cortez, J. Meehan, and S. Beyda-Lorie were voted in as members of the Committee on Committees.
- The question of an ad-hoc committee on the grade appeal policy was postponed.

6) Announcements

Provost Frank announced the university's receiving another Title V grant to promote the post-graduate programs in the College of Business and the achievement of the goal of accreditation.

7) **Adjournment**, S. Mahootian (J. Meehan)

Respectfully Submitted,

Shahrzad Mahootian, Secretary